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*Literature of English History* which has been out now for some seven or eight years.

N. M. TRENHOLME.

*The Making of Ireland and its Undoing, 1200-1600.* By ALICE STOPFORD GREEN. (London: Macmillan and Company. 1908. Pp. xvi, 511.)

THIS is a refreshing book. Among the many woes of unfortunate Ireland not the least has been the character of her historians. The patient, moderate, judicious, learned historian has for the most part simply passed poor Ireland by.

Signs have not been wanting lately that this period of neglect or mistreatment is approaching its close, and that the history of Ireland may receive as serious attention as that of other countries. Toward this consummation Mrs. Green's book is another step. Its principal contents are a vast number of quotations from contemporary sources describing the considerable development of Irish agriculture, trade, manufactures, and intellectual and artistic life in the Middle Ages, and the decay and destruction of these, due to the policy and the wars of the Tudor sovereigns, in the sixteenth century. The fifteenth century, a period which the English historians have generally treated as a specially dark age in Irish history, since it was the age when English power in Ireland was at its lowest ebb, is looked upon by Mrs. Green as a period of culmination of many elements of a truly native civilization. The relations of Ireland, economic and intellectual, were largely with the continent of Europe rather than with England. Many Irish chieftains who had no knowledge of the English language and were therefore looked upon by their conquerors as barbarians, nevertheless were well trained in Latin, and often spoke French or Spanish as well. More Irish scholars studied and travelled on the Continent than in England. An interesting list is given of translations from Latin, French, Spanish and English into Irish. It is also of extreme interest to get the glimpse we do of the relations of Irish chieftains and merchants with the Continent along commercial lines, and of the ancient *aonachs*, half-political gatherings, half-provincial fairs. A much more favorable comparison of the Irish land and judicial systems with the English is here made than that which has been most usual. The quotations from Irish patriot-bards and singers of the country's sorrows are most impressive.

No one can read the statements of Mrs. Green and the contemporary records on which they are based without the feeling that the native resources and achievements of Ireland belong on a much higher plane than they have been traditionally placed; and that the ignorant, selfish and generally inept policy of England in the sixteenth century brought about vast misery and permanent loss to Ireland and the world. Nevertheless, one may not agree—the cautious scholar certainly will not agree—with the author in her extreme estimate of these same achievements

and losses. One may feel tolerably sure he is dealing with exaggerations when it is declared on one page that "every port in the circuit of Ireland was then filled with ships busy in the Continental trade", and, as an instance, four pages later, that at Carrickfergus "in one summer three barks of 40 tons apiece discharged their loading of excellent good Gascoigne wine". One may have quite a realizing sense of the incapacity and ill-judgment shown in the long story of English misgovernment of Ireland, and yet doubt whether there was such a deep-laid and deliberate and wide-spread plot in the sixteenth century for the destruction of Ireland as is here attributed to the English sovereigns and their advisers and representatives in Ireland.

Mrs. Green has a loose habit of referring to periods centuries apart as if describing one particular age. Events of the years 1265, 1387 and 1565 are referred to in one space of eight lines; in another, we pass from 1565 back to 1233 without recognizing it, except by a marginal reference. It would certainly be far more impressive and more accurate if the author would chose a certain definite period and give a concrete and complete description of conditions during that period. Three centuries are too long a time to be treated as a historic unit.

Indeed it is the absence of constructive plan and definite statement that is the greatest weakness of Mrs. Green's historical work. We wander around in a maze of somewhat incoherent assertions and detached illustrations and receive a general impression rather than a set of clear notions. If the same material were more rigorously and more closely organized and the results more moderately stated the effect on scholars would certainly be deeper and more convincing and the impression made on the minds of more casual readers more clear and lasting. An equally serious defect is the lack of a bibliography. Certain enigmatic initials and abbreviations are constantly repeated but nowhere is there any statement of their meaning, or of the relative value as contemporary testimony of the sources which they represent. Certainly the general knowledge of the bibliography of Irish history, even by scholars, is not such as to enable an author to count on a familiarity with Irish historical sources as a matter of commonplace knowledge. Mrs. Green, in other words, gives her readers no real information as to what part of her narrative is solidly based, and what part is derived from doubtful or worthless testimony. But after all technical objections have been made this work must be recognized as being of serious value as a learned, original and sympathetic contribution to the history of Ireland.

EDWARD P. CHEYNEY.